THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The posting of a suitable person to the post is under consideration of the Government.

(d) In view of (b) Question does not arise

Proposal for a L.P.T. station at Paradip Port

*119. SHRI PRAVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal for having a L.P.T. Station at Paradip Port considering its International importance and weak transmission from Bhubaneshwar T.V. Station because of long distance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the L.P.T. station at Paradip Port will start operating?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): (a) No such proposal appears to have been received by Doordarshan in the recent past.

(d) Does not arise.

(c) Improvement of TV service at Paradip Port and adjoining areas would depend on future availability of resources for the purpose.

Observance of excise day

*120. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 24th February, 1993 was observed as Excise Day all over the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of the celebrations with background for such observance;

(c) whether this celebration included disposal of public grievances within some time limit; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) 24th February, 1993 was observed as Excise Day, by the Central Excise Collectorates all over the country. Government decided to observe the Day after considering a request made by the All India Federation of Central Excise Executive Officers to celebrate the Day, with a view to fostering a sense of pride and identity among the members of the service and to generate a feeling of camaraderie. The Day was to be celebrated by informative write ups/articles in newspapers/journals and magazines, holding seminars and lectures with participation by eminent persons in various fields, distribution of prizes and awards to field units/officers for outstanding work and organisation of cultural programmes and get-to-gethers.

(c) and (d) The celebrations did not include disposal of public grievances, as various fora for redressal of grievances of public/assessees already exist, like the Customs and Central Excise Advisory Council at the Centre and Regional Advisory Committees/Grievances Committees at the Collectorates' Headquarters providing effective opportunities for ventilation of general problems/specific grievances and redressal of the same.

Promotion of Tourism in unexplored Sports in Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir

802. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Ladhakh and Jammu Regions in Jammu and Kashmir State are abound in unexplored spots of tourist potential;

(b) if so, whether Government have drawn any time bound plan for the development of these spots to promote

tourism there and if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) by when these plans are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Area starting from Sirchu upwards to Leh has been included in the new Travel Circuit identified for intensive development.

Considering the importance of promoting tourism in the regions of Jammu and Ladakh, the Central Department of Tourism has extended financial assistance for 12 projects in Jammu region and 8 projects in Ladakh region during Seventh Five Year Plan and subsequent annual plans for 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Introducing new air flights

803. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines have introduced some new flights w.e.f. the 15th January, 1993;

(b) if so, the routes in which these new flights have been introduced;

(c) whether Government have introduced any new flights to Madhya Pradesh; and

(d) if not, whether Government have any new proposal in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (d) No, Sir. However with effect from 1.3.93 Indian Airlines has restored 89 per cent of the capacity it offered prior to strike by pilots.

Japanese Government loan to promote traffic in area of Buddhist Interests in Uttar Pradesh

804. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Japanese Government had sanctioned a huge loan to promote traffic in areas of Buddhist interests in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the loan has been withdrawn due to its non-utilization;

(c) if so, the details of reasons for its withdrawal; and

(d) whether any responsibility has been fixed in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes, Sir. A loan agreement was signed on 15th December, 1988 with the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) of Japan for the development of infrastructural facilities along the identified Buddhist circuit in UP and Bihar. Against the total project cost of Rs 220.43 crores, Yen 9.244 Billion will be made available by the OECF.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

Steep decline in tourist arriving India

805. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that despite the much touted Open Sky policy, the air transport system is in shambles, by heavy curtailment operations, chronic employee unrest and undue delays and the resultant loss in revenue;

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been a steep decline in tourist arrivals this year in comparison to last year; and